

Talnar's Rescue, Part 1

A Free *Star Wars* Mini-Adventure for the Rebellion Era

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In "Talnar's Rescue," the heroes are assigned to rescue Talnar, a Rebel agent who crash-landed on Naalol, a sparsely populated planet of the Mid Rim. Little is known about the planet and less about Talnar's current situation.

"Talnar's Rescue" is a *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* adventure set during the Rebellion era and is designed for six 3rd-level or four 4th-level Rebel heroes. It can be used as part of an existing Rebellion era campaign or adjusted for campaigns in other eras. This scenario first appeared in [Star Wars Gamer #5](#) but has been updated to reflect the revised game rules.



If you plan to play a character in this adventure, don't read any further. The information below is meant for the Gamemaster's eyes only. Because "Talnar's Rescue" is a double-length adventure, we'll run part 1 now and part 2 next week.

Getting Started

The heroes belong to an active Rebel cell or are agents who have worked together before. Conversely, they might be a team newly assembled for this mission. They should be provided with transport if they do not have a ship of their own.

Adventure Background

Talnar is an active Rebel procurement agent who was returning to base with a

shipment of droids. Over the planet Naalol, an Imperial customs cruiser attacked his ship. The ensuing battle left both ships critically damaged. Talnar managed to crash-land on Naalol, leaving the Imperials stranded in orbit, unable to land.

The Oquan, a group of local bounty hunters short on cash but not initiative, observed the battle from the planet's surface. Recognizing an opportunity, they sent an airspeeder to Talnar's crash site, intent on capturing Talnar and selling him to the Imperials for a few quick and easy credits.

The Oquan discovered Talnar alive and full of fight. Another brief battle ensued. The Oquan managed to subdue the agent, but not before he wrecked their speeder. Since Talnar's ship was a total loss, the opportunistic bounty hunters were forced to call for a ride from their companions. A quick search of Talnar's hold made them call for a few extra cargo skiffs.

Customizing the Adventure

Here are some ideas for modifying the adventure for other hero types or eras:

- Instead of Rebels, the heroes might be a group of bounty hunters hired to retrieve Talnar, a smuggler who has run into bad luck with a customs agent. Their employer wants Talnar and his cargo returned intact. In this case, local customs agents replace the Imperials in the adventure. This is suitable for any era.
- The players take the Imperial side, competing against the Rebels. To play this option, you will need to convert some Imperial characters to Rebels, or you may create new ones.

Scene 1: The Briefing

The heroes receive their briefing from Captain Res Nels, a Human male. The briefing can take place at the heroes' base, the local Rebel base, or any other private location you deem appropriate.

Captain Nels enters the room in a hurried manner. He quickly takes a seat and pulls out a battered datapad. He punches a few keys and says, "I have a mission for you. We received this report from the Naalol System."

He sets a holoprojector on the table and activates it. An unfamiliar light freighter flashes by, pursued by a *Guardian*-class Light Cruiser. A brief but spectacular battle ensues. The freighter pilot's skills are impressive, and his ship's armaments are clearly more than the Imperials bargained for. They are evenly matched, as shot after shot hits home. In one final volley, both ships are critically damaged. The freighter descends to the planet below. The Imperials are adrift, engines disabled and hull heavily damaged.

"The freighter is one of ours, called the *Golden Jewel*. Its captain is Lieutenant Talnar, one of our agents. We believe he dropped out of hyperspace to transmit a message via our communications satellite in the system. Either he had no chance

to transmit or he didn't want to tip off the Imperials to our satellite's presence. If his mission was successful, he was returning to base with a cargo of droids."

"The *Golden Jewel* crashed on Naalol. We have the coordinates from the satellite. We want you to bring Talnar and the droids back to us. He doesn't have much time. The Empire will send for reinforcements soon. You must get to Talnar before they do."

Captain Nels entertains a few questions. Above all, he stresses how little time the heroes have and encourages them to leave as soon as possible. Nels can provide the following additional information:

Naalol: The planet is a sparsely inhabited terrestrial world with few spaceports or major cities. There is a small Imperial presence. The inhabitants do not interfere with the regional government, keeping mostly to themselves. It's a backwater planet, but reasonably modern with little organized crime. The Naalol system has two other uninhabited planets, both in orbits extremely close to its star.

Talnar: The Rebel agent is a procurement specialist. He is a human male of about 45 years. He typically works alone. A picture is provided.

The crash site: The coordinates reveal Talnar went down in a mountainous region. It is late winter, so conditions could be difficult. The heroes are provided with system and planetary maps.

The Empire: There is a small garrison of about 30 Imperial personnel on Naalol, but reinforcements could arrive at any time.

The droids: Nothing more is known about them.

Equipment: Nels can provide some basic equipment and transport, if necessary. Anything overly expensive or rare is left up to the heroes to acquire as best they can.

Communications: Nels provides a comlink through which the Rebels may be contacted via the spy satellite. However, he instructs the heroes to use it sparingly, as each use might reveal the satellite's presence to the Imperials.

Scene 2: To the Rescue

When the heroes arrive in the system, their scans indicate some light starship traffic in the area. There is no sign of the damaged *Guardian*-class Light Cruiser or any Imperial vessels.

As the heroes approach Naalol, Spaceport Control hails them. The controller asks them if they need landing coordinates, though in no way implies they are necessary. A successful Knowledge (spacer lore) check (DC 15) reveals that a

landing permit is not necessary on Naalol. If no hero has an appropriate Knowledge skill, a successful Sense Motive check (DC 20) makes it clear that the controller is merely offering them a service and not giving them orders. Otherwise, let the players assume what they will.

If the heroes say they are looking for the downed ship, the controller takes a greater interest in them and immediately presses for more information. He requests that the heroes land at the spaceport in Rigton. If the heroes ignore this request, they have plenty of time to land elsewhere before any patrol craft reach them.

If the heroes have alerted Spaceport Control that they are looking for a downed starship and choose to land at the spaceport, they are greeted by a squad of eight stormtroopers (six are armed with blaster rifles, two with light repeating blaster rifles). Unless the heroes attack them, the squad leader asks them a few questions and lets them go about their business. If the heroes choose to attack the stormtroopers, they automatically gain a surprise round, as the stormtroopers are not expecting trouble. If the heroes defeat them, they can commandeer a nearby transport.

If the heroes' ship lands at the spaceport and hasn't drawn undue attention, the heroes can easily rent a landspeeder (100 credits/day) and, using the information provided by Captain Nels, reach the crash site in about two hours. A hero with the Trailblazing ability can attempt to shorten this time with a successful Survival skill check; the information provided by Nels gives the hero a +2 circumstance bonus to this check.

Imperial Stormtroopers (8): Male Human Thug 4; Init +0; Defense 11 (+1 class), DR 5; Spd 8 m; VP/WP 0/12; Atk +5 melee (1d3+1, unarmed) or +4 ranged (3d8/19-20, blaster rifle); SQ Immunities (see below); SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; FP 0; DSP 1; Rep +1; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10. Challenge Code B.

Equipment: Stormtrooper armor, blaster rifle, frag grenade, grappling hook, comlink, utility belt.

Skills: Climb -1, Intimidate +2, Jump -1, Knowledge (politics) +2, Profession (stormtrooper) +2, Read/Write Basic, Search +1, Speak Basic, Spot +1.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium, powered), Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapon).

Immunities: Stormtroopers are immune to being bribed, blackmailed, seduced, or routed. Any such attempt automatically fails; no check or saving throw is necessary.

Imperial Nen-Carvon PX-7 Troop Transport

Class: Ground (Tracked) **Crew:** 2 (Normal +2)

Size: Gargantuan (13.25 m long) **Initiative:** -2 (-4 size, +2 crew)

Passengers: 6 **Maneuvers:** -2 (-4 size, +2 crew)

Cargo Capacity: 100 metric tons **Defense:** 12* (-4 size, +6 armor)

Speed: 60 m **Shield Points:** 0

Maximum Velocity: 130 km/h **Hull Points:** 30 (DR 10)

Cost: Not available for sale

**Vehicle provides three-quarters cover to its crew and passengers.*

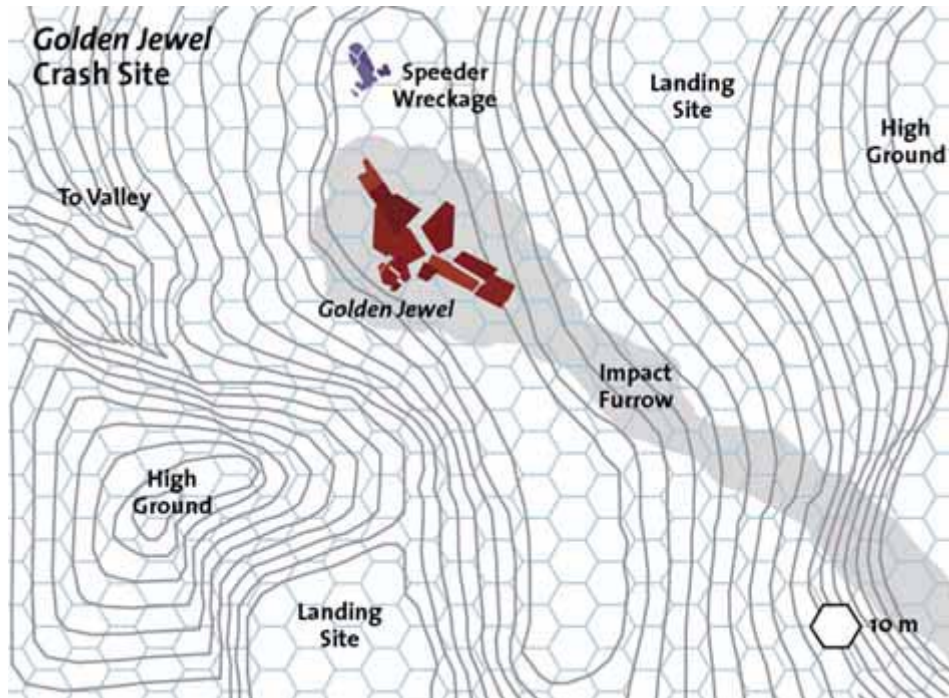
Weapon: Twin light blaster cannon (fire-linked); **Fire Arc:** Turret; **Attack Bonus:** +0 (-4 size, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 2d10; **Range Increment:** 100 m.

The Crash Site

If the heroes decide to land near the crash site, they discover the area is extremely rugged with high peaks and winding ridges. A strong winter storm passing through the area makes the approach even more hazardous. Fortunately, the crash site appears to be on the trailing edge of the front. The wind is very gusty, and it is snowing lightly. The conditions complicate flying, confound sensors, and hamper visibility.

Whether they use their ship or a hover transport, the heroes can survey the area with a low pass, requiring a Pilot check (DC 10) to avoid crashing. Sensors or a successful Search skill check (DC 15) reveals that the Golden Jewel struck and skidded along a ridge, coming to rest in a fissure halfway down a narrow valley. The wreckage of some kind of speeder lies near the ship. No one can be seen. Sensors don't show any signs of life. A few large clearings within 60 meters of the wrecks make suitable starship landing sites (landing requires a Pilot check against DC 10). If the heroes are using a surface transport, they can land within 20 meters of the crash site.

There is no one at the crash site. The Oquan have removed Talnar and the droids. The heroes can make a single Search check, with each member aiding the hero with the highest Search bonus, or they can break off into groups and make individual Search checks. It takes 30 minutes (divided by the number of groups searching) to scour the entire crash site. The level of success determines what they find. Read all of the appropriate information below, depending on the heroes' degree of success.



To determine what the heroes find at the crash site, compare their Search check result(s) to the following table:

Result Information

- 10-14** There was a battle at the site. Blaster and grenade damage is apparent all around the speeder, plus inside and outside the ship. Talnar most likely survived, though he might be wounded. Talnar's cargo is gone, although the damaged hold had to be cut open to remove it.
- 15-20** Many people have been in the area, leaving tracks throughout the ship and on the ground, all lightly covered by the recent snowfall. There are four medpacs and some basic tools aboard, but nothing of real value. There is little worth salvaging. The airspeeder -- a MandalMotors Shadow V Combat Airspeeder -- was destroyed by weapon fire; it shows no sign of impact damage from a crash. It was a modified civilian craft, not an Imperial transport.
- 20+** Tracks lead to various points around the site, then disappear completely, most likely onto waiting speeders. Within the wreckage of the cockpit are two portable control pads. Both are heavily damaged, and neither seems to have anything to do with the ship. A successful Repair check (DC 10) or other appropriate skill check reveals they are droid control pads, likely for Talnar's cargo. Neither works, though it might be possible to cannibalize parts from one to make the other operational.

Imperial Patrol

If the heroes decide to take 20 on their Search checks or spend more than 20 minutes at the crash site, they encounter an Imperial patrol of four biker scouts. While on their way to inspect the crash site, the patrol observed the heroes' approach. Choosing to abandon their speeder bikes at the bottom of the valley, they've been making a slow ascent through the fissure to sneak up on the heroes. One of the biker scouts will try to gauge the group's numbers and strength, using the Hide and Move Silently skills as appropriate.

The patrol's main weapons are stealth and surprise. Their white armor also helps camouflage them in the blowing snow (+2 circumstance bonus to Hide skill checks), the cold weather muffles sounds (-4 penalty to Listen skill checks), and the ground is difficult terrain (movement is halved). The patrol has not reported in for fear of alerting the heroes with a comlink transmission. They'll try to ambush the heroes as they exit the *Golden Jewel*. Make a Spot check for each hero and compare the result to a Hide check for the Imperials. Any heroes that fail do not act during the surprise round of this encounter. If the fight turns against the scouts, one attempts to call in the situation.

If the heroes quickly search the ship and depart, they do not encounter the biker scouts. The Imperials, however, have been alerted to the heroes' presence. They'll report in with a description of the group.

According to the heroes' intelligence briefing, Rigton is the closest city to the crash site. If they are traveling on land, they encounter the Oquan before they reach Rigton (see Scene 3 below). If the heroes travel by starship, any hero monitoring the sensors locates the Oquan convoy with a successful Computer Use check (DC 15). If the heroes decide to leave Naalol, the mission is a failure. It'll be the last important mission they get for the Rebellion.

If the heroes decide to check out the convoy, there are many opportunities to do so along the route. The rocky outcroppings of Mount Mogaar provide many places to hide and observe or ambush anyone on the road. If the heroes hurry, they might be able to reach the mountain before the convoy clears the storm.

Repairing the Droid Control Pad

An hour of work and a successful Repair skill check (DC 15) reveals that the droid control pad will not work without obtaining several new parts (an encrypted multi-signal transmitter, mini-viewscreen, keypad, and indicator lights). If the check result is 20 or more, the heroes also discover that the control panel contains a voice recognition package used to give verbal commands.

Heroes searching for replacement parts for the droid control pad can easily find shops selling all except the encrypted multi-signal transmitter. The transmitter, though legally obtainable, is uncommon. The heroes have a few options. They can try to find a black market supplier (Gather Information check, DC 20), who takes three hours to locate, and pay him 1,000 credits for the device. Conversely, they can attempt to jury-rig a normal encryption transmitter (Repair check, DC 22). Though they don't know it at the time, this will only allow them to give identical orders to all the droids via the control pad.

The heroes must enter the correct access code (Talnar knows it) or succeed at a Computer Use check (DC 20) to activate the pad. There is currently one voice pattern stored in the pad, but others can be added in 10 minutes with a successful Computer Use check (DC 15) once the pad has been activated. However, the droids can't be activated or controlled until part 2 of "Talnar's Rescue."

Imperial Biker Scouts (4): Male Human Thug 2/Scout 2; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Defense 15 (+2 Dex, +3 class), DR 4; Spd 8 m; VP/WP 16/16; Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, knife) or +5 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol) or +5 ranged (3d4, hold-out blaster); SQ Immunities (see below), trailblazing; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +3; FP 0; DSP 1; Rep +0; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8. Challenge Code C.

Equipment: Scout trooper armor (statistics given below), blaster pistol, hold-out blaster, field kit, knife, 2 frag grenades, Aratech 74-Z speeder bike.

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +4, Jump +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Pilot +4, Read/Write Basic, Repair +2, Ride +7, Search +3, Speak Basic, Spot +4, Survival +3.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium, powered), Track, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapons).

Immunities: Biker scouts are immune to being bribed, blackmailed, seduced, or routed. Any such attempt automatically fails; no check or saving throw is necessary.

Scout Trooper Armor (Powered): Cost 6,000; DR 4; Maximum Dex Bonus +3; Armor Check Penalty -2; Speed 8 m or 4 m; Weight 12 kg. The helmet, which is included in the armor's cost, provides a +2 equipment bonus on Search and Spot checks.

Scene 3: The Bridge

The Oquan are familiar with the region. They are experienced bounty hunters and are not about to go walking into a potential ambush without checking things out. If the heroes decide to ambush or observe the Oquan, read the following:

Late in the afternoon, a convoy consisting of one modified landspeeder and four armored hover trucks reaches a bridge spanning a canyon. Two speeder bikes deploy from one of the larger transports. Each bike carries a driver and a passenger. They zip across the bridge at high speed. Upon reaching the first switchback, the two passengers fire their jet packs, launching themselves high in the air. Using sensor packs, the two hovering Humans sweep the area looking for any signs of pursuers.

If the Oquan discover the heroes or are attacked, they try to escape as quickly as possible. If the heroes attempt to stop the Oquan convoy by creating a roadblock, read the following:

The convoy doesn't slow down as it approaches the blocked section of roadway. The large armored hover trucks blast the roadblock with heavy weapons and barrel right through. The top hatches of both vehicles pop open, and four Humans wearing jet packs launch into the air.

Once the convoy clears the final switchback up the mountain, the speeder bikes form a rearguard. The lead landspeeder and four hover trucks accelerate, trying to outrun their pursuers. If this proves impossible, the Oquan drop smoke bombs, hurl thermal detonators, and fill the tunnel with blaster fire as they flee. Finally, the

Mogaar Tunnel divides into multiple branches before it reaches Rigton. The various branches lead to different areas of town. The Oquan divide up. If the heroes are close enough, they can still pursue one or more speeders; otherwise, the chase is over.

If a battle ensues for more than a minute (10 rounds), it attracts the attention of three nearby TIE fighters (see Chapter 11 of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*[core rulebook](#)) sent to the area to aid the Imperial search. The TIE fighters fire only in self-defense as they close in for a better look. From the biker scout's report, the TIE fighters should be able to identify the heroes. If fired upon, the patrol will attempt to disable as many craft as possible, delaying any escape until reinforcements arrive. The fighters otherwise focus on stopping anyone from getting away.

If at any point the heroes attempt to contact the convoy and negotiate a deal, the Oquan play things very close to the vest and remain highly suspicious of the group. They will not admit to having Talnar or the droids. They constantly watch the heroes, waiting for a surprise attack. They will not negotiate on the road, insisting instead on meeting in a neutral location in Rigton. The lieutenants, "Patch" and Selana, are bluffing and have no intention of dealing with the heroes.

Oquan Lieutenants (2): Male and Female Human Scout 4/Scoundrel 2/Bounty Hunter 2; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative; Defense 17 (+2 Dex, +5 class), DR 3; Spd 10 m; VP/WP 47/12; Atk +6/+1 melee (2d4, vibrodagger) or +8/+3 ranged (3d8, heavy blaster pistol); SQ Trailblazing, heart +1, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to Defense), illicit barter, lucky (1/day), target bonus +1, sneak attack +1d6; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +6; FP 2; DSP 4; Rep +3; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 10. Challenge Code D.

Equipment: Combat jumpsuit, heavy blaster pistol, vibrodagger, Mitrinomon Z-6 jet pack (see below).

Skills: Computer Use +11, Gather Information +10, Hide +12, Intimidate +5, Listen +11, Move Silently +13, Pilot +12, Read/Write Basic, Repair +7, Search +8, Speak Basic, Spot +11.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Track, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapons, vibro weapons).

Oquan (15): Male and Female Human Scout 4; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Defense 15 (+2 Dex, +3 class), DR 3; Spd 10 m; VP/WP 25/12; Atk +3 melee (1d4, knife) or +5 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Trailblazing, heart +1, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to Defense); SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4; FP 1; DSP 1; Rep +1; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 9. Challenge Code C.

Equipment: Combat jumpsuit, blaster pistol, knife, Mitrinomon Z-6 jet pack (see below).

Skills: Computer Use +8, Gather Information +6, Hide +9, Intimidate +2, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Pilot +9, Read/Write Basic, Search +4, Speak Basic, Spot +8.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Track, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, simple weapons).

Mitrinomon Z-6 Jet Pack

The Mitrinomon Z-6 jet pack is perhaps best known as the model used by the infamous bounty hunter Boba Fett. Though inexpensive to purchase, the Z-6 is costly to keep fueled.

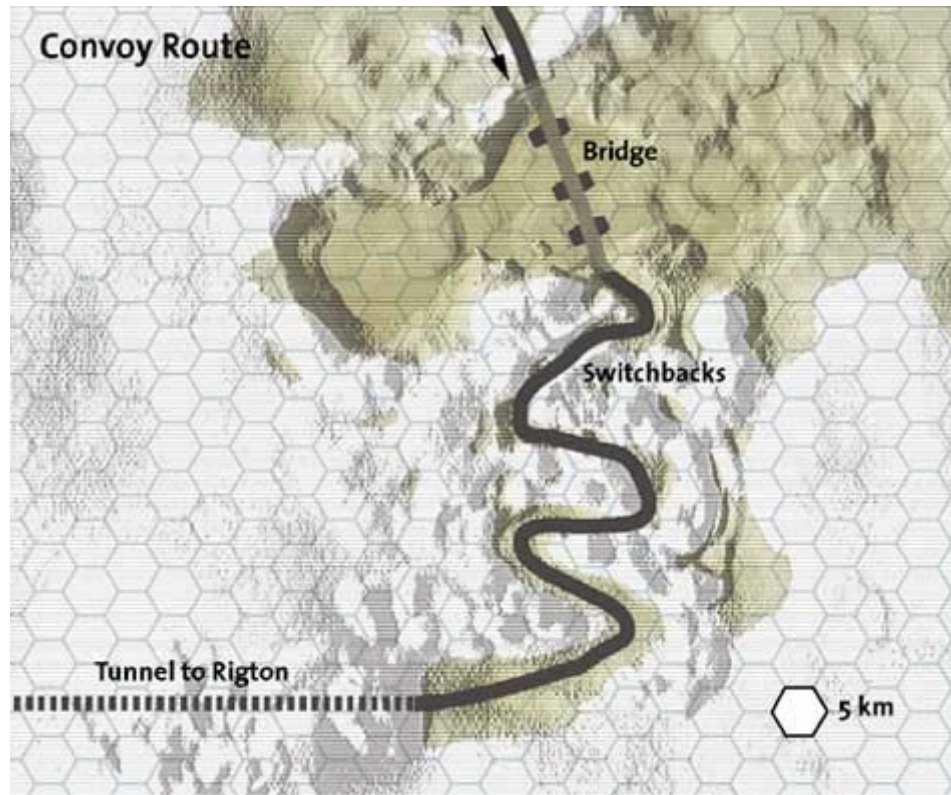
The Z-6 has enough lift to carry the user plus an additional 100 kg. A fully charged fuel cell provides either 20 short bursts or enough fuel to travel 500 meters. One burst can carry the user up to 30 meters straight up or up to 60 meters horizontally as a full-round action. Multiple bursts can be used to sustain movement in the same direction or hover in place, both of which are move actions that use a burst of fuel. Landing requires a successful Pilot check (DC 12). If the user fails, he gets no actions for one full round while trying to regain his bearings.

Cost: 300 (jet pack), 150 (fuel cell); Weight: 30 kg.

Speeder Bikes (2)

Use the Ikas-Adno 22-B Nightfalcon from Chapter 10 of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised core rulebook.

Class: Ground (Speeder)	Crew: 2 (Skilled +4)
Size: Large (4 m long)	Initiative: +3 (-1 size, +4 crew)
Passengers: 4	Maneuvers: +3 (-1 size, +4 crew)
Cargo Capacity: 50 kg	Defense: 14* (-1 size, +5 armor)
Speed: 100 m	Shield Points: 0
Maximum Velocity: 200 km/h	Hull Points: 22 (DR 5)



An Unexpected Success?

If the heroes manage to defeat the bounty hunters, they find Talnar stunned and unconscious in the lead speeder. The Oquan hunters have packed all of Talnar's droids into the four hover trucks. If the heroes rescue Talnar but not all of the droids, the Rebel will do all he can to convince them to obtain the droids. Continue to Scene 4: City Search, below.

If the heroes get one or more of the droids, they cannot activate them without a working control pad.

Scene 4: City Search

Once the Oquan bounty hunters reach Rigton, they quickly take secret tunnels to their hidden hideout. If the heroes follow them in a ground vehicle, the Oquan simply seem to disappear around a corner. No matter how hard they try, the heroes are unable to find the concealed tunnel entrance the Oquan used.

Rigton is a small city, built against a crescent shaped ridge. Tunnels honeycomb the mountainside, effectively giving the city two sets of streets -- one above ground, one below. Fully half the city exists below ground, and many buildings have levels both above and below the surface. The tunnels are always busy, particularly during the winter months.

With the exception of a few roads into the mountains, the main roads run down the valley to larger cities on the plains below. Like many cities on Naalol, Rigton is reasonably self-sufficient and isolated. There is no visible Imperial presence, although local officials cooperate with the Imperials. Imperial law is enforced, if leniently.

Rigton appeals to all kinds of isolationists: rich, poor, political refugees, criminals, and anyone who wants to be left alone. The criminal underworld tends to be just that -- operating under the surface, within the tunnels. Except for a few isolated areas, they don't dominate the city.

Late in the evening, the storm reaches Rigton. Snow falls heavily and the wind is strong. Temperatures plunge to well below freezing. Most of the city's inhabitants take to the tunnels, leaving the surface streets virtually deserted.

Talnar is impossible to find. If the heroes try looking for him or ask about the Rebellion, they get the cold shoulder. There are no Rebel operatives in Rigton, but you might want to invent one if the players need a hand or a favor. The Oquan, however, are infamous in Rigton. Everyone has heard of them, but few actually know how to contact them directly.

Investigating the Oquan

A Gather Information check provides the heroes with information about the Oquan. The level of success determines what they find. Read all of the appropriate information below, depending on the heroes' level of success.

Result Information

- 5-9** "The Oquan, huh? I know a few things about that greedy crew. Some of the best bounty hunters around here, to be sure. Well, they were, anyway. I guess we'll see how they come off now that there's been a few changes. If you're looking to hire them, talk to an info broker named Cotan. The best place to find him is at Prit's Free Pit."
- 10-14** "They love money. They can't get enough credits. They even wear it like a badge of pride. Take a look at one of 'em and you'll see a credit chip or coin stuck on their armor somewhere. It's supposed to be the first credit they earn when they join up. In fact, it's the only credit they get from their first job. Their Number-Two guy wears his on his eye patch. It's disturbing to see. Like the credit's looking at you."
- 15-19** "They fly really well, though. Not ships. I'm talkin' jet packs, here. They add a whole 'nother dimension to the Oquan's tactics. You think you got 'em cornered and BOOM! They shoot straight at you. Or up. Or whatever."
- 20-24** "From what I hear, the Oquan took on a high-paying job to capture a Hutt. The Oquan succeeded, but we figure they lost a third of their people, ships, and equipment in the final grab. I think they had to spend every credit fixing themselves back up and to pay off some Hutts who were suddenly very interested in seeing them eliminated."

25+ "Since Rel Acoi took over, he's been tryin' to prove that the Oquan are still great. He's quick on the uptake, and always after a quick credit, too. Acoi would like a little fame to go with his creds. He's loud. He brags. He taunts. He loves to gloat over his captives. He's always wavin' his blaster around when he's on a tirade. Don't underestimate him."